



THE RAINBOW

USHA JOSHI



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ORIGINAL HINDI: USHA JOSHI

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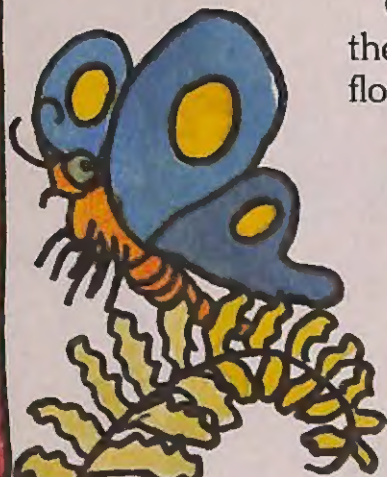
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The rains had begun.



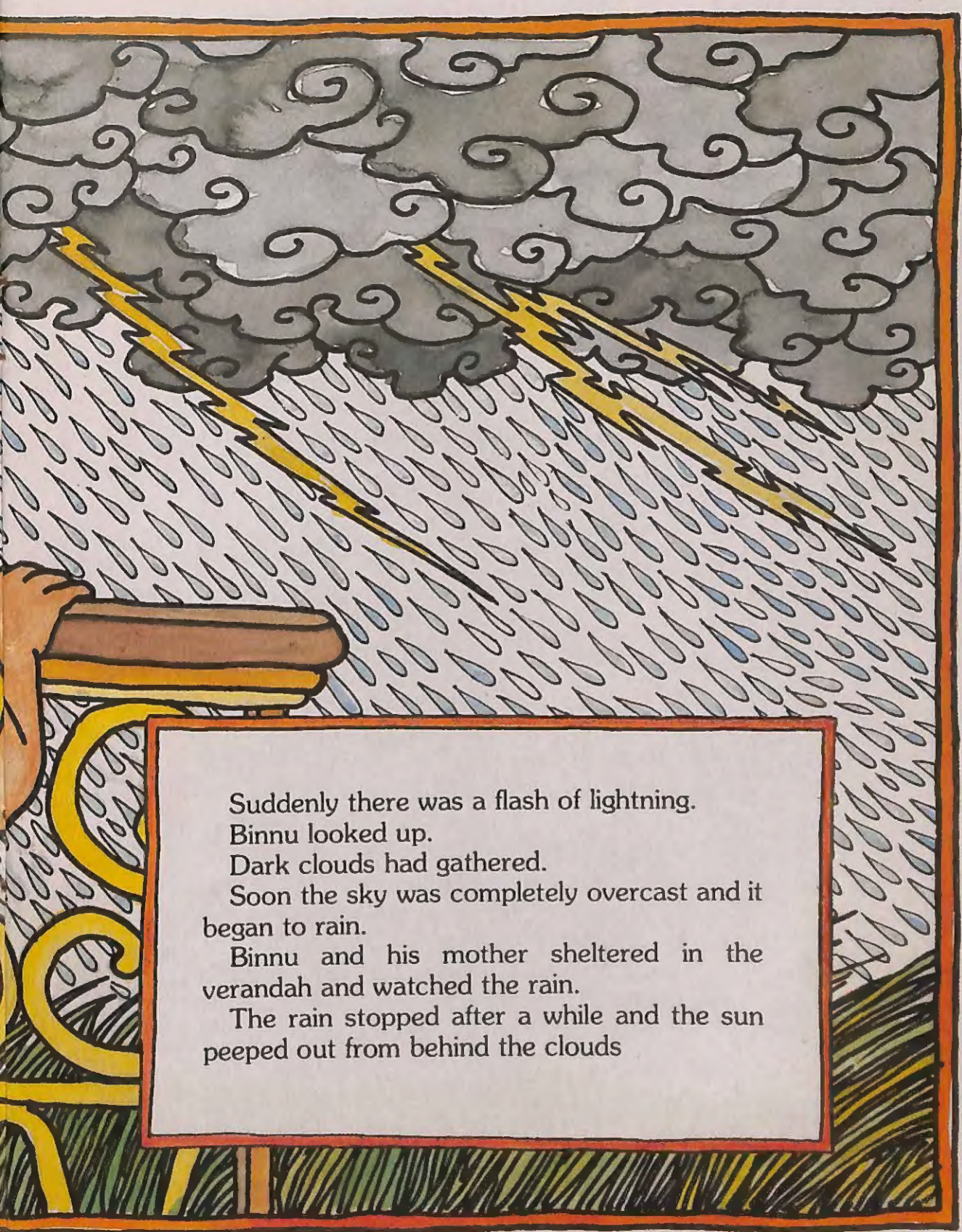
Out in the lush, green garden Binnu chased the multi-coloured butterflies which flitted from flower to flower.





Binnu ran up to his mother.
"What are you doing?" he asked.
She smiled. "I am planting flowers."
Plants take root easily during the monsoon
and with plenty of water to nourish them, new
sprouts appear.

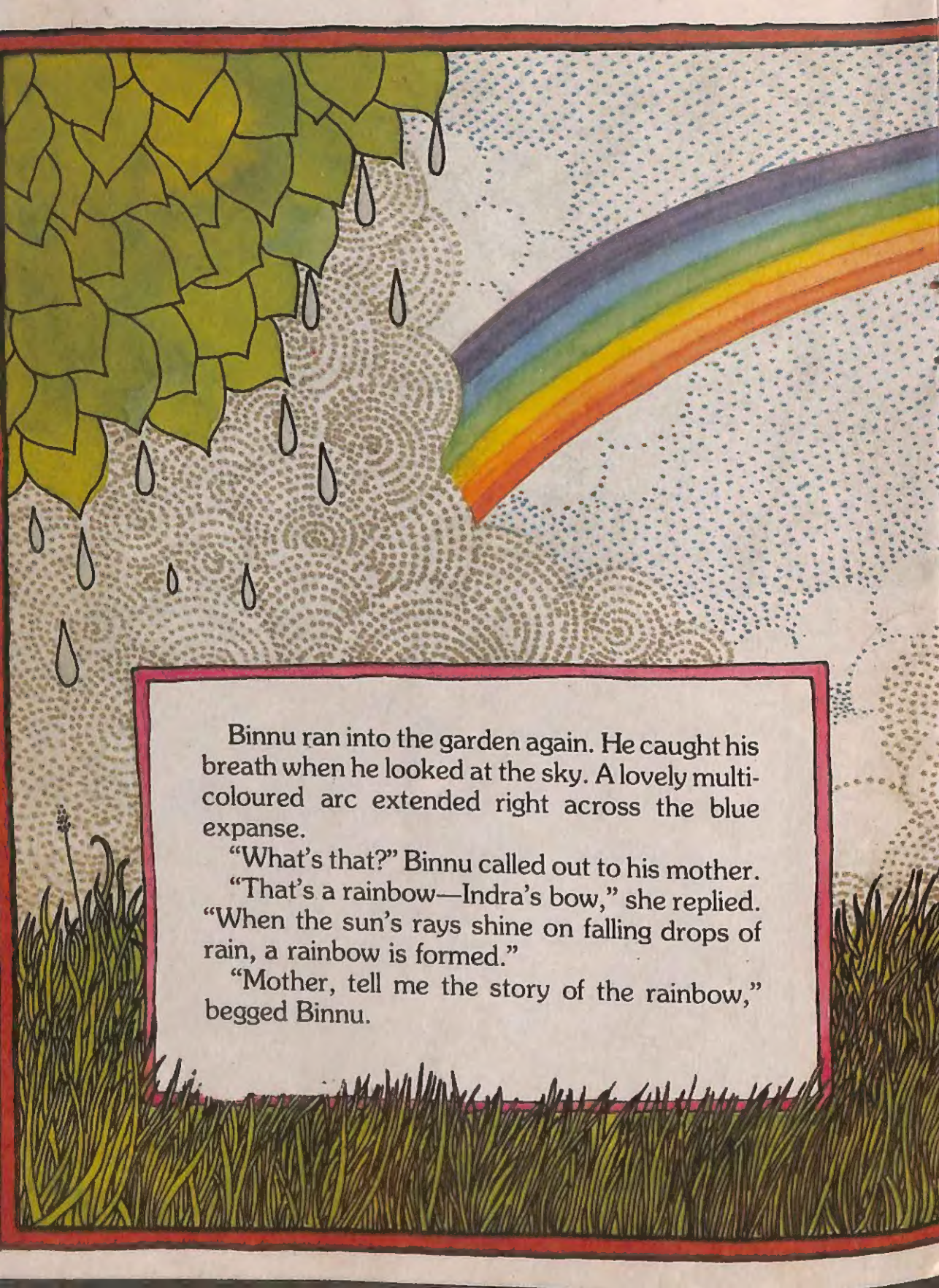




Suddenly there was a flash of lightning.
Binnu looked up.
Dark clouds had gathered.
Soon the sky was completely overcast and it
began to rain.

Binnu and his mother sheltered in the
verandah and watched the rain.

The rain stopped after a while and the sun
peeped out from behind the clouds



Binnu ran into the garden again. He caught his breath when he looked at the sky. A lovely multi-coloured arc extended right across the blue expanse.

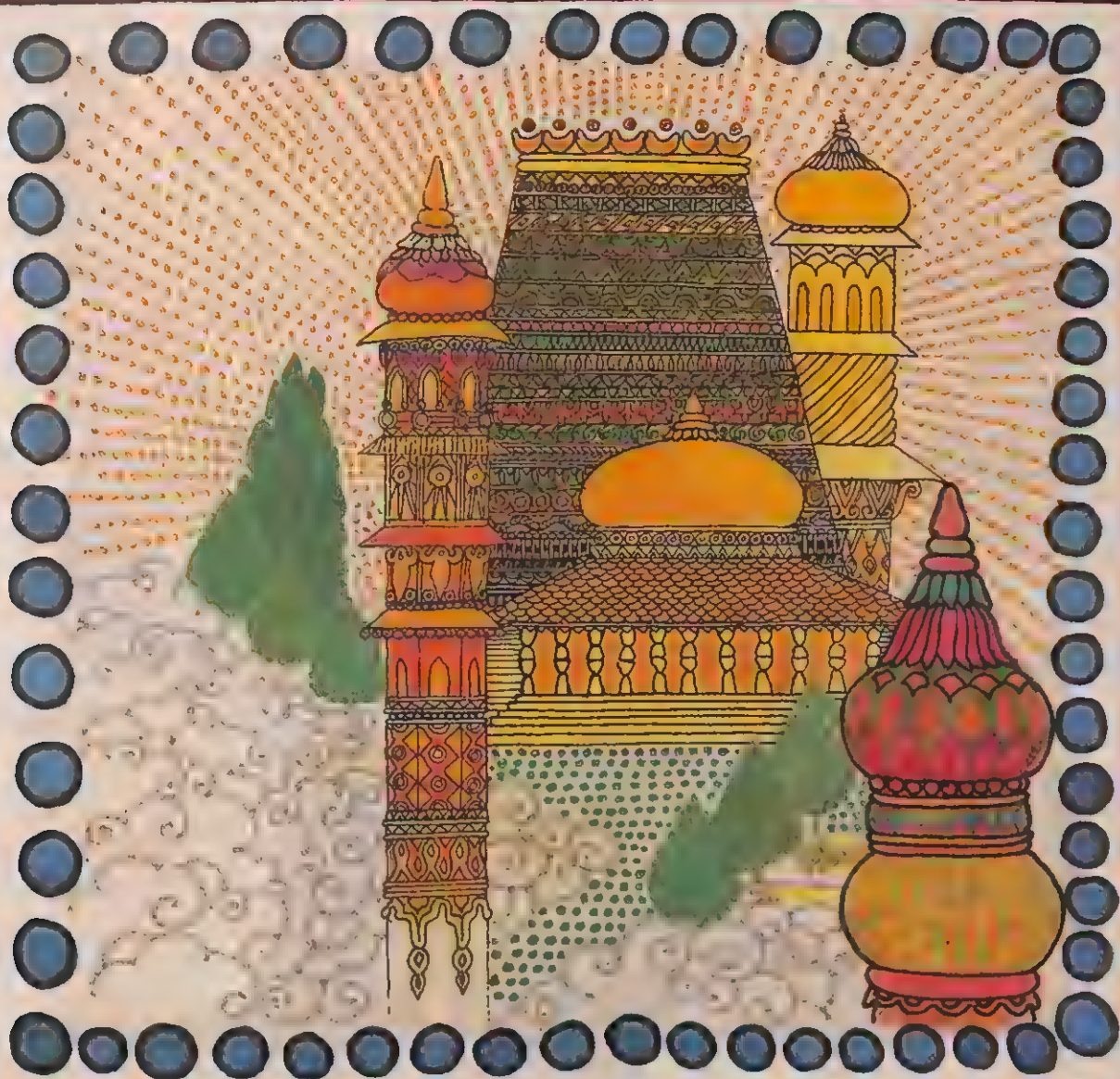
"What's that?" Binnu called out to his mother.

"That's a rainbow—Indra's bow," she replied. "When the sun's rays shine on falling drops of rain, a rainbow is formed."

"Mother, tell me the story of the rainbow," begged Binnu.







“Well, in King Indra’s court there were seven naughty children who were always quarrelling and fighting.

“One day an argument arose over who was the greatest among them.



"The red child said,
'How can it be
Anyone but me?
Watermelons, pomegranates, apples,
tomatoes
All have red, you see.'



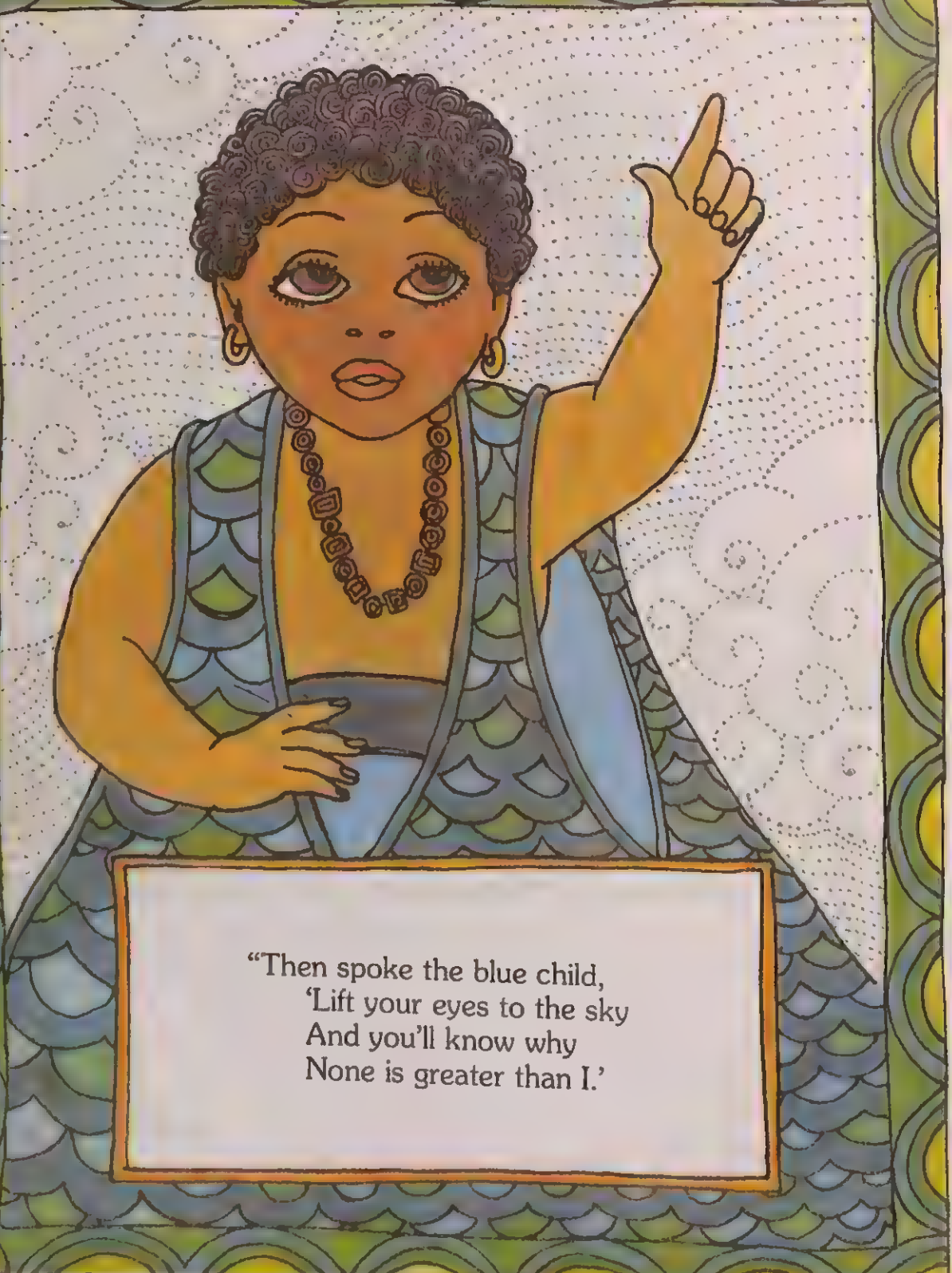
"Spoke the orange child,
'Oranges, carrots or grain
They are all the same
Their colour to me they owe
All over the world they glow.'



"The yellow child piped up,
'It is said
So far has my fame spread
Guavas or bananas, sunflower or rose
In all of them its yellow that 'shows.'



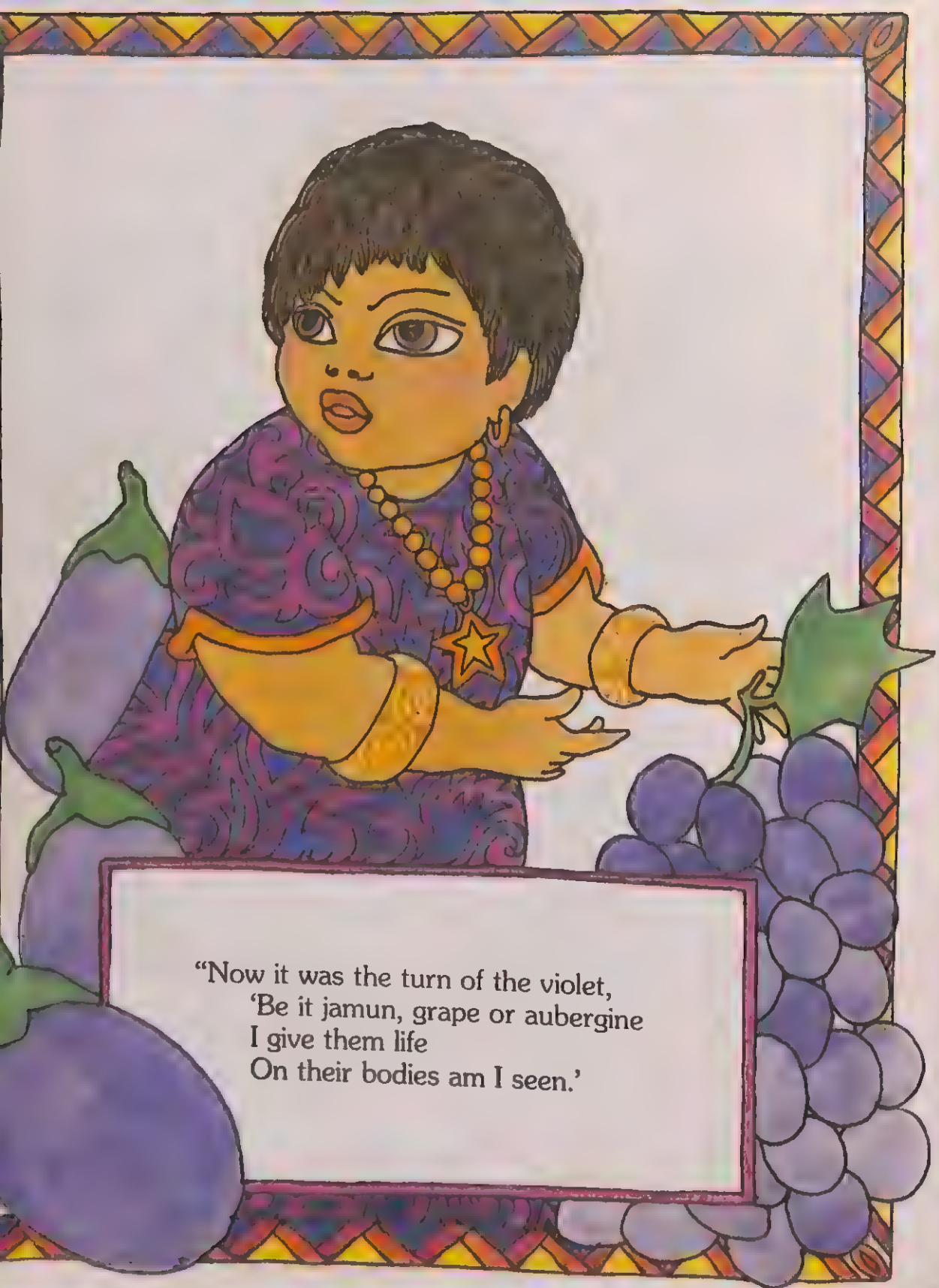
“Now it was the turn of the green child,
‘Wherever there is green
I can be seen
On unripe mangoes and tamarind is my
seat
My fame proclaimed by the parakeet.’



"Then spoke the blue child,
'Lift your eyes to the sky
And you'll know why
None is greater than I.'



“But the indigo child interrupted,
‘Have you seen the peacock dance?
Or the flowing stream?
The water-lily indigo blue
The lake itself takes my hue.’



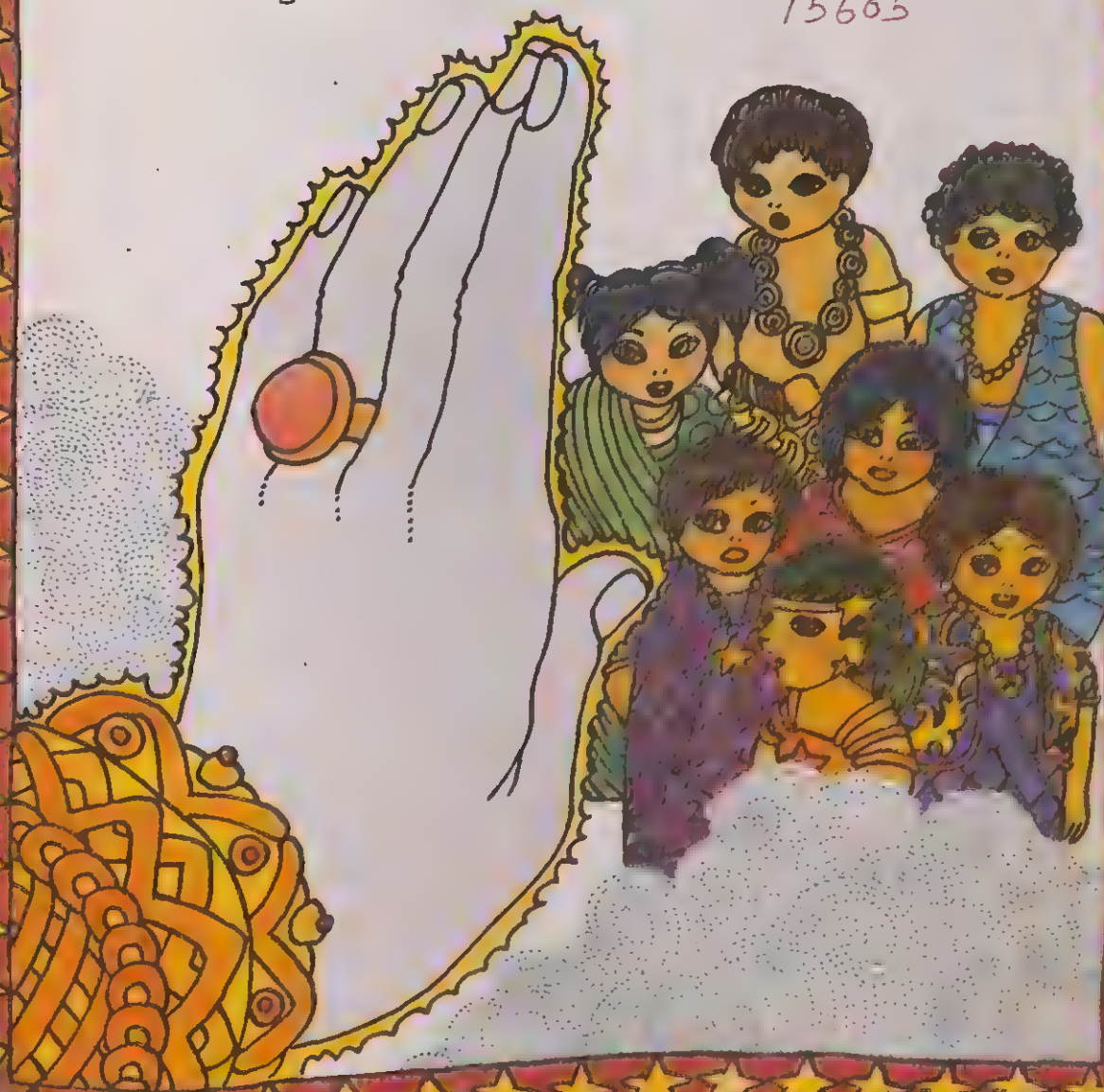
"Now it was the turn of the violet,
'Be it jamun, grape or aubergine
I give them life
On their bodies am I seen.'

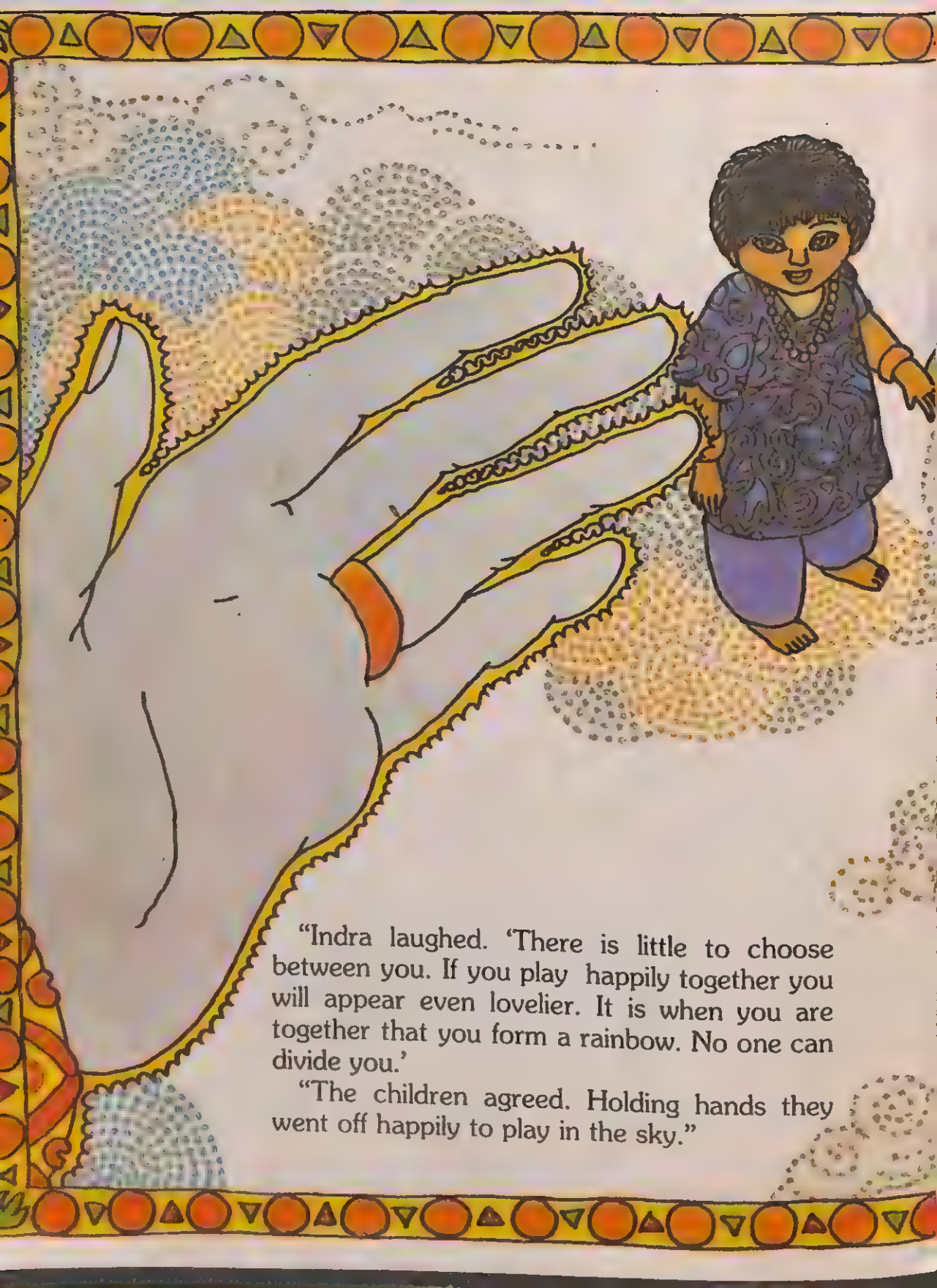
"The children were quarrelling when Indra arrived on the scene. 'Why are you squabbling?' he asked. 'You know good children don't quarrel.'

"They stopped squabbling.

"They told God Indra the cause of the squabble and asked, 'You tell us who is the best among us?'

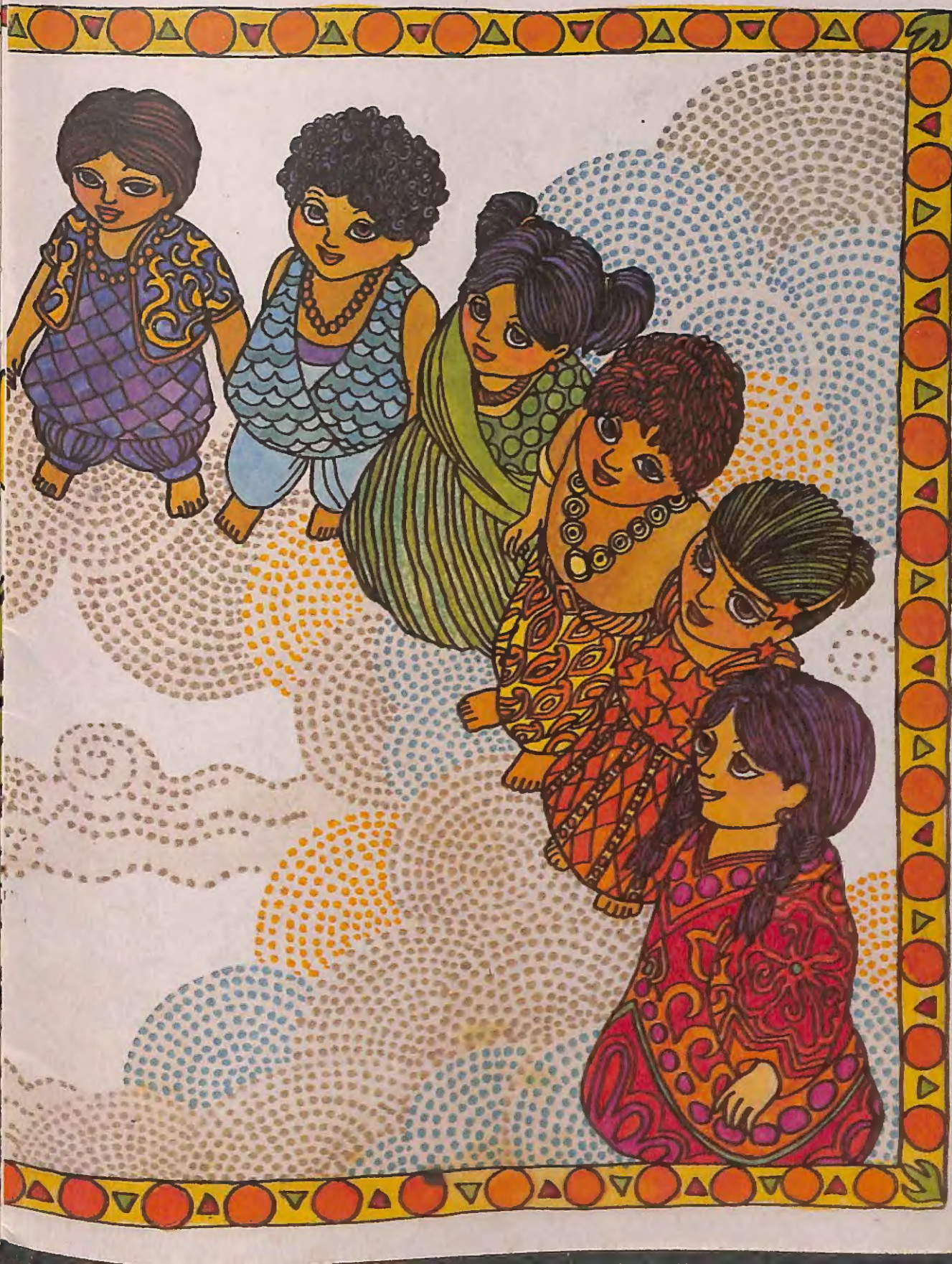
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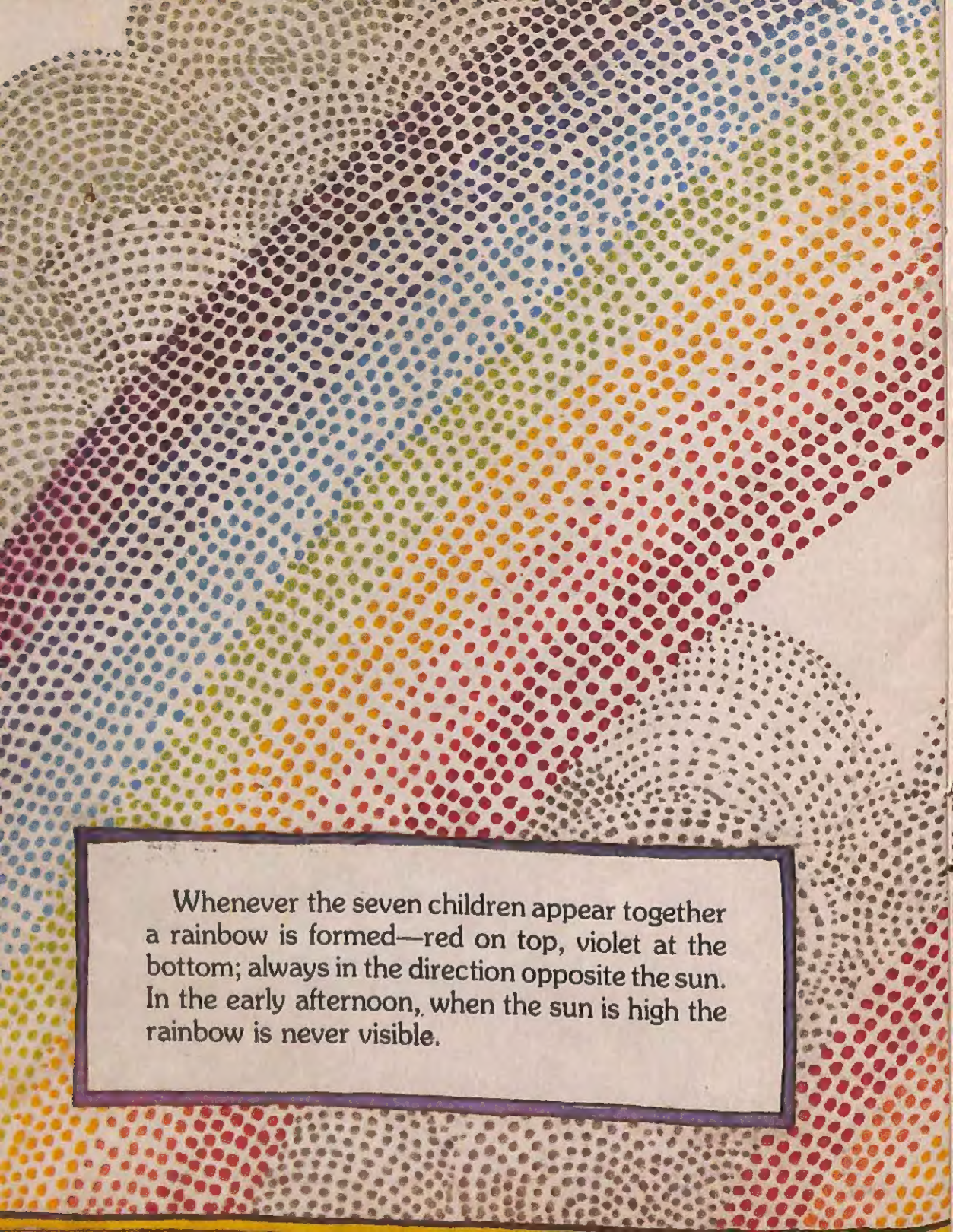




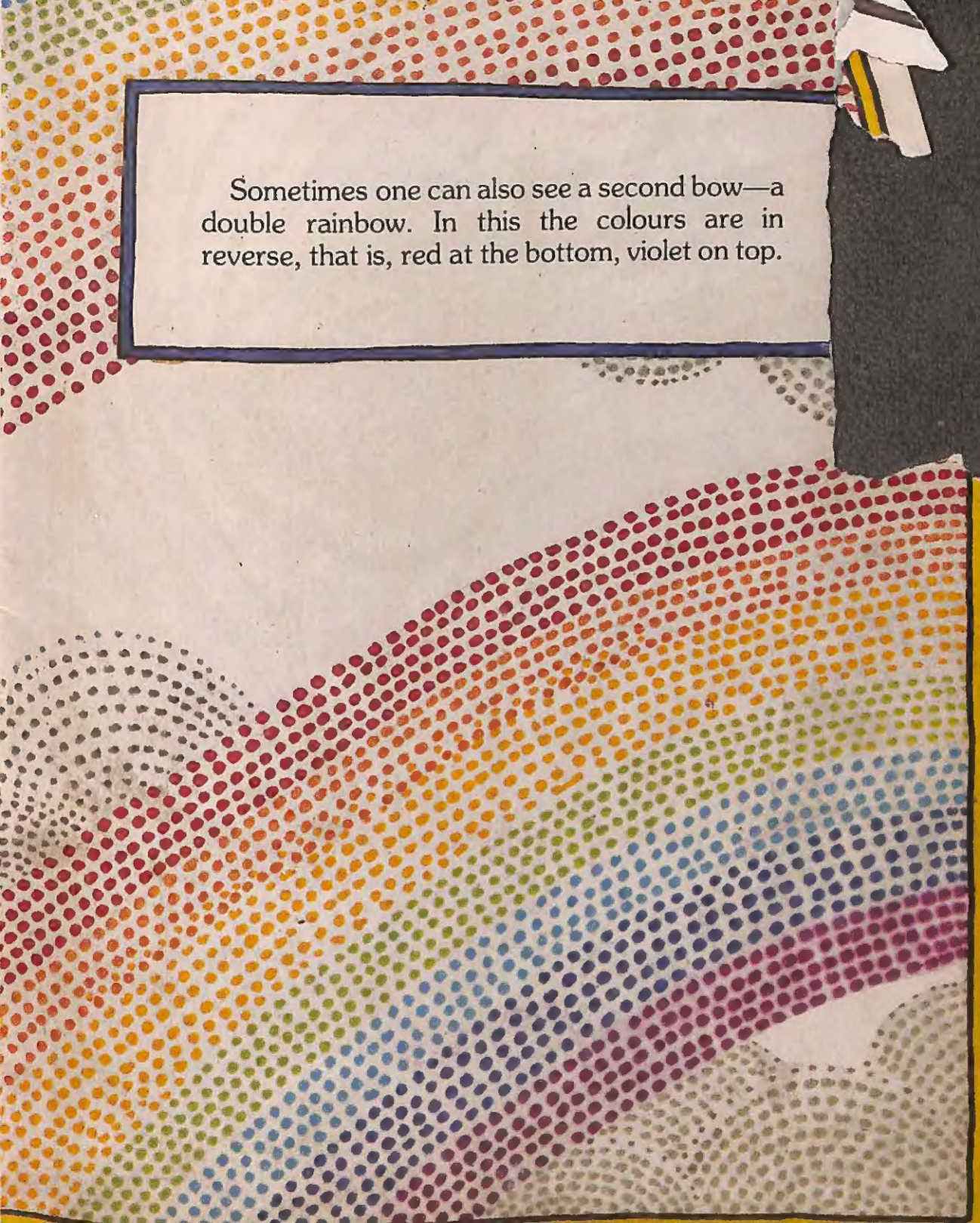
"Indra laughed. 'There is little to choose between you. If you play happily together you will appear even lovelier. It is when you are together that you form a rainbow. No one can divide you.'

"The children agreed. Holding hands they went off happily to play in the sky."






Whenever the seven children appear together
a rainbow is formed—red on top, violet at the
bottom; always in the direction opposite the sun.
In the early afternoon, when the sun is high the
rainbow is never visible.



Sometimes one can also see a second bow—a double rainbow. In this the colours are in reverse, that is, red at the bottom, violet on top.



Children love rainbows. Peacocks dance and everyone is happy. It is as though seven lovable children are frolicking—sometimes red leading, at others, violet.